

# EXCELLENCE IN CUSTOMER SERVICE

Participant's Manual

Comprehensive Public Training Program (CPTP)

Sponsored by the Louisiana State Civil Service

# **EXCELLENCE IN CUSTOMER SERVICE**

**Comprehensive Public Training Program (CPTP)** 

Sponsored by the Louisiana State Civil Service

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# **EXCELLENCE IN CUSTOMER SERVICE**

### **COURSE DESCRIPTION**

This one-day class provides a foundation to help participants address the service needs of their customers. Participants will learn how to assess individual situations to identify potential opportunities for providing excellent customer service. They will also learn specific strategies to help them meet the needs of customers working within Louisiana state government. Additionally, participants will learn strategies for dealing with difficult situations and challenging customers. This class will also help employees learn methods for utilizing appropriate and available resources within their agencies.

### **LEARNING OBJECTIVES**

- To help state employees better understand the importance of meeting the needs of customers.
- To identify strategies to provide excellent customer service.
- To formulate a proactive approach for handling the "challenging" customer.

### JOB OUTCOMES

- Provides service to meet the needs of internal and external customers.
- Models and encourages high standards of customer service.
- Demonstrates a positive attitude when serving customers
- Demonstrates consistency between words and actions when providing customer service.
- Demonstrates appropriate behavior when dealing with challenging customers and difficult situations.











## WHAT IS CUSTOMER SERVICE?

Have you ever been to a restaurant where the food was average and the service was satisfactory? Did you return? Do you even remember? Have you ever been to a restaurant where both the food and service were exceptional? Did you return to that restaurant?

When you can't remember anything or nothing sticks out to you, this means you're satisfied. A satisfied person has no story to tell. This is your 3. But when you have an exceptional experience, a 5, you remember it, you tell everyone about it, and you return again and again. This is what we call **CUSTOMER LOYALTY**.

Excellent customer service goes well beyond service; it's about achieving customer loyalty. Today's goal is to learn how we can reach that 5 and *provide customer service that is so excellent it compels others to share their positive experience*.





### **INDIVIDUAL/SMALL GROUP ACTIVITY**

Individually, think of a time when you experienced excellent customer service and a time when you received terrible customer service. Write your story in the space provided below and be prepared to share with your group and/or the class.



, , ,	
1 What is your 5 story?	
2 What is your 1 story?	

# THE CASE FOR SERVICE

We all have been on the receiving side of poor customer service, so we know how frustrating it can be to not get the help or assistance we need. It's important that we don't become someone else's bad customer service experience.

YOU NEVER GET A SECOND CHANCE TO MAKE A FIRST IMPRESSION.

CUSTOMERS DON'T DISTINGUISH BETWEEN YOU AND THE ORGANIZATION.

GOOD SERVICE ENCOURAGES RETURN VISITS.

CUSTOMERS TELL OTHERS OF GOOD OR BAD EXPERIENCE.

We live in a world of Yelp!, Facebook, Instagram and other networks that allow us to distribute messages **immediately**. Not only can you tell someone what you've experienced in an instant, but you can snap a picture or take a video, and upload it to the internet. On the flip side, we can also share our good reviews just as quickly which is what we want to talk about today.

### TOP 10 BEST AND WORST COMPANIES IN TERMS OF CUSTOMER SERVICE

Who do you think are the best and worst companies in terms of their customer service? Circle your top three and worst three company picks.

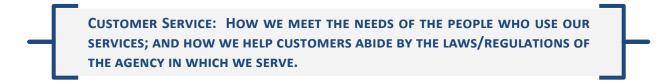
BEST		
■ American Express	■ UPS	
■ Sony	■ Apple	
■ Hilton Hotels	■ Marriott	
■ Hewlett-Packard	■ Trader Joes	
■ Chick-Fil-A	Amazon	

WORST			
■ Bank of America	■ Comcast		
<b>■</b> AT&T	■ Wells Fargo		
■ Time Warner Cable	■ DirecTV		
■ Citigroup	■ Dish Network		
■ Sprint	■ AOL		

SOURCE: http://247wallst.com/special-report/2014/07/18/customer-service-hall-of-fame

# **DEFINING CUSTOMER SERVICE**

There are a number of definitions for the term "customer service." Given that this course focuses on service within state government in Louisiana, let's consider the following definition.



INDIVIDUAL ACTIVITY	7
Define what customer service means for your agency.	

# WHO IS RESPONSIBLE?

Serving the customers of the state of Louisiana is not the job of a few public servants. Rather, **ALL public servants** have a responsibility for serving customers within state government.





### **SMALL GROUP ACTIVITY**

In your groups review and discuss the following mission statements. Then, match each mission statement with the appropriate state agency.

GOHSEP GOVERNOR'S OFFICE OF HOMELAND SECURITY & EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS	SCS  DEPARTMENT OF STATE  CIVIL SERVICE	<b>DEQ</b> DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY	LDVA  DEPARTMENT OF  VETERANS AFFAIRS	DOTD  DEPARTMENT OF  TRANSPORTATION &  DEVELOPMENT
	governme force that  Aid all res of the Un periods or beneficiar entitled un  Lead and se to, and recommend those we see the second sec	e human resource is nt to attract, develop excels in delivering quidents of the State of sited States during and service during peaces, in order to obtain ander the laws of the Urban support Louisiana and covery from all emerges the best transportations et he best transportations erve: customers, publices, and fulfillment of every member of the	and retain a producti ality services to the cit Louisiana who served by war, combat, campletime, along with the any and all benefits the citizens in the prepencies and disasters.  On system and earn the ic officials, and colleaging house for faciliting of environmental project resources needs	in the military forces paign, or any special neir dependents and to which they may be sees thereof.  The aration for, response the trust and respect of trues.  The arating awareness of projects to address the eds, by empowering

# WHO ARE OUR CUSTOMERS?

Perhaps one of the most fundamental aspects of providing customer service involves understanding **who the customers are**. There are many different ways to describe the types of customers within state government. There are *former customers, potential customers, disgruntled customers, happy customers, angry customers, rude customers,* and the list goes on and on.

For purposes of understanding how to provide customer service, this course will focus on **two different types of customers**.

INTERNAL CUSTOMERS	People in our own organization who are dependent on us for materials, information, instructions, participation, and/or assistance. Internal customers cannot perform their tasks to maximum efficiency without the help of us, and this has either a direct or indirect effect on the external customer.  Examples:
EXTERNAL CUSTOMERS	People who use the services of the agency, or those who can be considered 'traditional' customers.  Examples:

# **PROVIDING QUALITY SERVICE**



# CLASS ACTIVITY— LET'S TAKE A POLL

workplace environment.	

# **CUSTOMER NEEDS**

	nental priority in providing customer service involves understanding the needs of customers. This section the four main needs of all customers. These needs include the following:
1	Customers need to feel
2	Customers need to be
3	Customers need to feel
4	Customers need to feel

# STRATEGIES FOR MEETING BASIC CUSTOMER NEEDS

It is important that public servants try to meet their customers' needs as often as possible. Think about experiences that you have had as a customer where you felt your needs were not met.

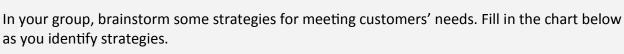
- 1 HOW DID YOU FEEL ABOUT THE INDIVIDUAL PROVIDING THE SERVICE?
- 2 How did you feel about the organization he/she represented?

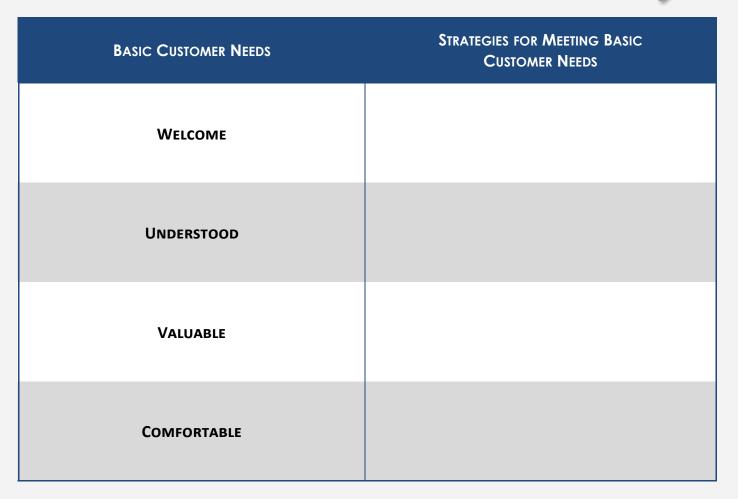
Putting ourselves in the shoes of the customers is one way to better understand their needs; however, there is more to meeting needs than meets the eye. It requires that you think further than just one experience or one encounter. For this reason, a comprehensive set of strategies has been developed as a guide for providing service to the customers of the agency in which you work.

There is not a one-size-fits-all approach that can be used to meet a customer's basic needs. Because each customer is different, customers deserve service that is sensitive to their unique differences.



### **SMALL GROUP ACTIVITY**





# PROVIDING EXCEPTIONAL CUSTOMER SERVICE

### WHAT'S IN IT FOR ME?

Providing exceptional customer service does not just happen. It requires knowledge, patience, and the willingness to help **ANYONE** regardless of who they are. This is not always easy for public servants, but there are some payoffs.

**PERSONAL SATISFACTION** – There is a good feeling when you know that you have helped someone, regardless of whether or not they know or understand what you did to help them. **REPUTATION** – Being known as someone who is "good with customers" improves your credibility as an individual. **ENJOYABLE WORK ENVIRONMENT** – Pleasantly surprising a customer with great service can change the entire interaction into a positive and powerful experience. It feels good to be kind to others, and it's contagious. Customers want to interact with people who show them respect.

# PROVIDING EXCEPTIONAL CUSTOMER SERVICE

Most of the time spent interacting with our customers involves routine requests repeated frequently and over and over again. Each of these requests present prime opportunities to surprise our customers by exceeding their expectations with **extraordinary service**.

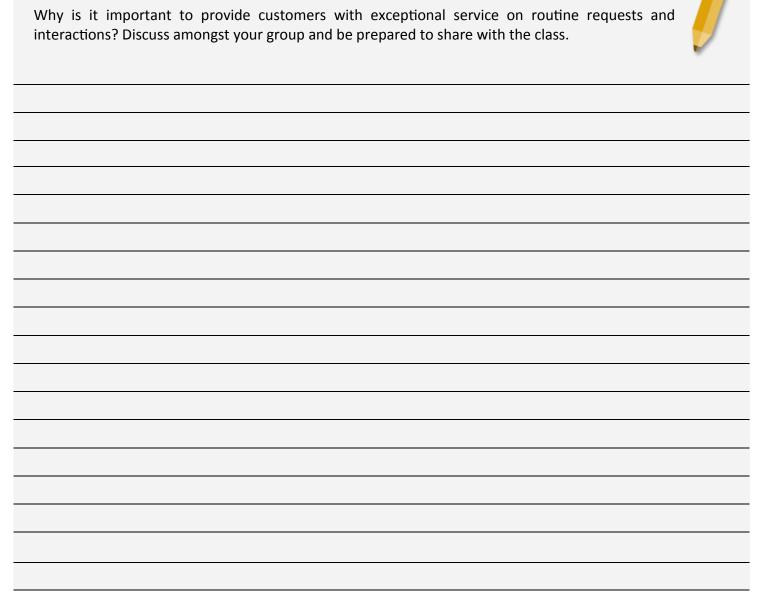








### **GROUP DISCUSSION**



# **CUSTOMER SERVICE BASICS**

### **COMMUNICATION**

Public servants in Louisiana serve customers in a wide variety of ways, in different places, and at different times. Although many different work environments exist among the participants in this class, now is the time to think about ways in which you can provide exceptional customer service even in the most common routines.

Language     Assistance	Listener     Norma	Department     Three	♦ Acknowledge
<b>♦</b> Assistance	◆ Name	<b>→</b> Three	◆ Smile
FACE TO FACE COMM	MUNICATION		
✓ Always	your customer	<u></u>	
Use the custome			'T SAY HE BEAT HIS DOG."
Be a good			— DEAT HIS DOG.
Watch your bod			
	at you say, it's how you	say it.	
_		,	
TELEPHONE COMMU	INICATION		
	ne within ring		
Give your	and the name of the	e	
☑ Offer			
☑, you ca	n hear it!		

# **CUSTOMER SERVICE BASICS**

	Diagna causes on usus
3	PLACING CALLERS ON HOLD
	Ask permission.
	Wait for a response.
	☑ Be prepared.
	Check back within 30 seconds.
	Thank the customer for holding.
4	EMAIL CORRESPONDENCE
	Acknowledge receipt of e-mail.
	Respond in a timely matter.
	Give estimates.
	Follow up!
	V Follow up:

# **CUSTOMER SERVICE BASICS**

5 TAKING MESSAGES	
☑ Be accurate.	
Write as much information as possible.	
write as much information as possible.	
Be tactful.	
Place the message in the designated place.	
Remember to follow up!	

# **DEALING WITH DIFFICULT CUSTOMERS**

### **THE LESSON OF THE FIST**

enever we try to force anyone to che h), and as a result, become more moti  Eliminate the word from y  Speak in the!	ivated to defend their position.	
Employ thetechnique	e.	
GROUP ACTIVITY: WHAT'S WRONG VIOLENTIAL IN YOUR groups, discuss the phrases like identify a more appropriate way of management of the second s	isted below. Describe the problem(	s) associated with each phrase and
	WHAT'S WRONG WITH THIS PHRASE?	What's a more appropriate phrase?
What seems to be the problem?		
There's no way we can do that.		
I don't handle that.		
Our computers are down.		
You should have		
I can't help you without		

# **DEALING WITH DIFFICULT CUSTOMERS**

### L.A.S.T.

When you encounter a difficult customer, it is your responsibility to manage the situation, whether you were the one who may or may not have in fact upset the customer. The LAST acronym can help you through these challenging situations and hopefully help you turn a difficult customer into a loyal customer.

	LISTEN	
A	APOLOGIZE	
S	SOLVE	
Ū	THANK	



### **GROUP ACTIVITY: LAST STRATEGIES**

In your groups or with the class, fill in the blanks below with the appropriate terms from the word bank.

1.	Listen without
2.	Get the
3.	Acknowledge the and their
4.	Tell them what you do.
5.	for the problem and for their inconvenience.
6.	the alternatives.
7.	Restate the
8.	Take to make it happen.
9.	the customer.
10.	when possible.

### **WORD BANK**

- **♦ SOLUTION**
- **♦ INTERRUPTING**
- **◆ CAN**
- **♦ PROBLEM**
- **♦ THANK**
- **♦ REACTION**
- **♦ FACTS**
- **♦ APOLOGIZE**
- **♦ STATE**
- **◆** ACTION
- **♦ FOLLOW-UP**

# THE DIFFICULT CO-WORKER

1. Responding inappropriately to the snide comment.

Count to five before responding.

### **RECOGNIZE THE TRAPS**

	V	Be direct.
2.		er addressing the issue.
	V	If left unchecked, situations can fester and eventually boil over.
W	ORKII	NG WITH OTHERS
The	ere ai	re 3 basic truths to working with others. If you understand these truths, there's less of a possibility that
sor	neon	e's words or actions will affect you.
	1.	
7	2	
;	3	

# **CHALLENGING SITUATIONS**

Routine interactions with customers can, indeed, consume the majority of a public servant's time within a workday. However, dealing with difficult customers can consume a great deal of negative energy. Unfortunately, the tougher situations tend to stay with us and provide negative memoires of customer service.

Several common challenging situations include the following:

	•				
$\sqrt{}$	The	agency	makes	а	mistake
4		0		•	

**✓** The customer makes a mistake

**☐** Unable to give customer what he/she wants



### **GROUP ACTIVITY**



Use the space provided below to brainstorm strategies of how to deal with each kind of difficult situation listed above.

CHALLENGING SITUATION	CUSTOMER SERVICE STRATEGIES
AGENCY MAKES A MISTAKE	
CUSTOMER MAKES A MISTAKE	
UNABLE TO GIVE THE CUSTOMER WHAT THEY WANT	

# **GRAB BAG**



# SMALL GROUP ACTIVITY

Review the scenario given to your table. Using all of the information discussed today, work with your small group to create a more appropriate response to the scenario.



_

# **EXCUSES**



# INDIVIDUAL ACTIVITY

List five common excuses you have heard when	someone ha	as offered indifferent customer service.	
Excuse #1			
Excuse #2			
Excuse #3			
Excuse #4			
Excuse #5			

# **NOTES**

# **NOTES**

# **REFERENCES**

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# **JOB AIDS**

### **CUSTOMER SERVICE DEFINED**

1 How we meet the needs of the people who use our services.

2 How we help customers abide by the laws/regulations of the agency in which we serve.

### **TYPES OF CUSTOMERS**

**External:** people who use the services of the agency

**Internal:** people who work within the agency

### **CUSTOMER NEEDS**

Customers need to feel **WELCOME**.

Customers need to be **UNDERSTOOD**.

Customers need to feel **VALUABLE**.

Customers need to feel **COMFORTABLE.** 

### **STRATEGIES FOR MEETING CUSTOMER NEEDS**

CUSTOMER NEEDS	STRATEGIES FOR MEETING CUSTOMER NEEDS
WELCOME	<ul> <li>Be friendly.</li> <li>Greet Customers.</li> <li>Use a positive tone of voice.</li> <li>Show positive body language.</li> </ul>
Understood	<ul><li>Be an active listener.</li><li>Repeat/rephrase for clarity.</li></ul>
VALUABLE	<ul><li>Refer to customer by name.</li><li>Answer customer's questions.</li><li>Thank participant for experience.</li></ul>
COMFORTABLE	<ul> <li>Explain what to expect during the experience.</li> <li>Use open body language.</li> <li>Show concern/empathy.</li> </ul>

### **STRATEGIES FOR HANDLING CHALLENGING SITUATIONS**

CHALLENGING SITUATION	CUSTOMER SERVICE STRATEGIES		
AGENCY MAKES A MISTAKE	<ul> <li>Apologize sincerely (even if it's not your fault)</li> <li>Show the customer your appreciation</li> <li>Go above and beyond for the customer</li> </ul>		
CUSTOMER MAKES A MISTAKE	<ul> <li>Respectfully acknowledge the situation</li> <li>Objectively explain the situation</li> <li>Act as a partner to the customer</li> <li>Help the customer to fix the problem/situation</li> </ul>		
UNABLE TO GIVE CUSTOMER WHAT THEY WANT	<ul> <li>Empathize with the customer</li> <li>Respectfully explain the reasons for the inability to fulfill the customer's wishes</li> <li>Offer other options for customers</li> </ul>		

### **CUSTOMER SERVICE BASICS**

<del></del>	OWER SERVICE DASIES	
2	FACE TO FACE COMMUNICATION  Always acknowledge your customer.  Use the customer's name.  Be a good listener.  Watch your body language.  It's not what you say, it's how you say it.  TELEPHONE COMMUNICATION  Answer the phone within three rings.  Give your name and name of department.  Offer assistance.  Smile, you can hear it!	EMAIL CORRESPONDENCE  ✓ Acknowledge receipt of e-mail. ✓ Respond in a timely matter. ✓ Give estimates. ✓ Follow up!  TAKING MESSAGES ✓ Be accurate. ✓ Write as much information as possible. ✓ Be tactful. ✓ Place the message in the designated place. ✓ Remember to follow up!
3	PLACING CALLERS ON HOLD  Ask permission.  Wait for a response.  Be prepared.  Check back within 30 seconds.  Thank the customer for holding.	